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Higher up the food chain: putting cops where they belong

My theme is putting cops where they belong: much higher up the food chain.

And I'm going to be quite blunt. I see cops way down snuffling around in the dirt with the dregs of our society - like garbage collectors who pay lip service to recycling, but have little influence on public policy.

I see cops as the infantry – that meekly follow orders – rather than as diplomats who head off conflicts before they start.

I see police who run from one crisis to another; rather than as campaign managers who know how to bring down crime.

In fact I see cops who aren't experts at all in crime reduction - who know little more about it than the man or woman propping up the local bar.

That's why POP is so important, and that's why I'm delighted to be here in Charlotte among people whom I suspect may share these fairly cynical observations. And I'm honoured at last to meet Herman Goldstein – who hit on many of the problems and solutions long before I did.

Indeed, who am I – a television journalist – to tell you how to run your own affairs? How presumptuous.

Let me give you a bit of background

I'm originally a political journalist – I covered the violence in Northern Ireland, then regular news. But for over 20yrs (which is more than most police officers) my background has been in law enforcement - ie catching crooks. The program is called *Crimewatch* and here in the US its equivalent is *America's Most Wanted*. It's based on our show, though try as I may I don't think I could ever look as macho as John Walsh.

The UK original started in 1984 and unlike the US version most of our cases are unsolved – we're asking viewers to detect them, not just find fugitives. So we work closely with investigating officers and over the years we've been involved with most of Britain's most biggest inquiries. About a third of our cases is solved, about ½ of those as a direct result of our appeals.

Even so, after a time it dawned on me that there has to be a better way.

It all seemed so sterile. So fatalistic.

As an outsider working with the police 3 things shocked me:

1. We put a huge effort into the most serious crimes but at the cost of ignoring mass crimes – the everyday chaos in which big crime flourishes; but above all they're mass crimes are the ones that affect most people's quality of life.
2. I was also (privately) appalled at how investigative techniques were often inadequate, and that crimes were seen as individual offences rather than as patterns.
3. Above all I became disillusioned that the process was aimed at loading bad guys onto a conveyor belt which fed lawyers and court procedures, rather than addressed the citizens' priority which is to cut crime.

The cops were like drones at the end of a production line taking off faulty goods – but never going back up the factory floor and redesigning the whole process.

- Why not? Why aren't the cops up there in the boardrooms shaking a stick at the manufacturers and retailers?
- Why aren't you shaking your fists at the town planners *insisting* on better architecture? And not giving in til you get it.
- Why aren't you in the corridors of government demanding a veto on reckless policies?

That's what I want to examine in this talk. Not just to be provocative – though I hope I will be - but because it seems as plain to me as a poke in the eye that all of those things are reqd.

We need to take police out of the role they see themselves in – ie picking up the pieces – *and have them help design how the pieces are made.*

It's easy to be beguiled by the modernity of policing: the new technologies, especially in detection. But the police are still essentially a nineteenth century creation: quasi-military command structures and bogged down in a legacy of outdated rules and redundant practices. In fact in some ways things have got worse. The original mandate for the Metropolitan Police Service in 1829 placed crime prevention as the first function of the new public force. But (away from this conference) most forces pay lip service to prevention. Perhaps the rot started in 1840 with the first use of plain clothes detectives. After a serious jewel robbery in Welbeck Street in London the police called in "intelligent men" to trace the stolen property.

Ever since, police officers have sought to be thought "intelligent" by getting out of uniform and being in plain clothes. And ever since then the tail has wagged the dog – the process of improving detection has come to dominate the process of prevention.

The defining features of crime control are that we have fobbed off responsibility to the police and left them to chase symptoms, not solutions

And we can't just blame the police for this. We wall them in. Lord Stevens, who's just stepped down as head of Scotland Yard, had some radical ideas and was a great supporter of the UCL Jill Dando Institute of Crime Science. But he was always obstructed by what he called the three 'M's - The demands of the **m**oment, the demands of the **m**edia, and the demands of **m**eamurements which were measures of compliance rather than actual crime.

If we're to break out of this moribund way of working, we have to dispel two delusions: two ingrained pieces of folklore that keep us locked into old thinking. The fact is your colleagues, politicians, and voters, almost all believe in these two primitive bits of folklore. Until we convince them otherwise they will always want more of the same.

The first myth is that crime is a product of falling moral standards. The second falsehood is that most criminals are different from you and me. If you believe those myths you are bound to be a pessimist and a fatalist. How are you going to re-engineer human morality; how are you going to recast the "criminal classes"?

In fact the real reasons crime has risen are not only different, but give cause for hope – because each of them leads to solutions.

The first sponsor of crime is opportunity. Without it crimes can't take place. And now there is more to steal, more easily, than ever before in history. Crime is not a result of society's failures, as much as a result of its successes! If we didn't have to lock our doors in generations past it's because we didn't have credit cards and video-recorders; and kids didn't get mugged for their stylish trainers. Designer labels have created fashion victims in more ways than one.

Watch out, there's temptation about.

Some years ago I was in a village in the heartland of central China making a film about these two children. I was surprised to see barbed wire around some new houses. "What's that for?" I asked. The village mayor told me, "It's to stop burglary, we've had lots of televisions stolen." I said I didn't think China had much burglary, or was that just Communist propaganda? "No", said the head man, "My parents, and grandparents, never *heard* of burglary." So, I asked: "Why do you have burglary now?" He took a step back and looked at me as if I came from another planet. "They didn't have televisions."

Here was oriental wisdom that seems to evade us in the West. TV breeds crime not because of the programs but because of the TV's themselves. Quite ordinary artefacts have now become temptation. What's more, almost every one of the other benefits of a free and rich society has consequences which encourage crime.

Never mind the seven deadly sins, let me give you the seven deadly effects of growing wealth.

First there's more to steal. People who believe in growing evil say "We used to be able to keep our homes unlocked!" But go back 50 years. As I say, where was the TV, the hi-fi, the DVD, the keys to the car outside; where were the credit cards...

If you did have wealth you locked it up. And you had lots of people to act as constant guardians in your home.

The second by-product of economic success is that people have more time on their hands. Most kids were poor and were sent out in the fields or up chimneys or down mines. They didn't hang around the estate looking for excitement.

Third, there's more beer money: far more social drinking, often with anti social results, and – yes - drugs. We all know the disinhibiting effects.

Fourth, there's more mobility – and as we all know, being away from the constraints of home opens up new temptations as well as new opportunities.

Fifth, there's anonymity. This is partly due to mobility and partly to urbanisation – but the fact is it's easier to get away with behaving badly if no-one in the area knows you.

Sixth, there are so many new inventions that create entirely new crimes. Old offences like sheep stealing, horse theft and highway robbery become extinct, but new ones multiply: car theft, credit card deception, air time fraud with mobile phones and crime scams through the Internet.

Seventh there's more liberty. Freedom to wear provocative clothes, to behave loudly, to offend people, to do your own thing. There is simply more acceptance of individual differences – which means there's correspondingly less conspicuity if you're behaving oddly.

So seven results of economic prosperity which contribute at least as much to crime as the seven deadly sins.

It's a glib line that poverty causes crime – and certainly it's more rational for poor people to break the rules than people who do well playing by the rules. But look at the graph which plots GDP – ie national wealth – against recorded crime. This is from England & Wales but it could be from any advanced nation. We all know why crime started to dip in the last few years – and I'll come back to that in a moment.

You all know this stuff. You're familiar with the term "situational crime control" and many of you work with it and know more about it than I do. But most people here aren't like most people outside this room. Cops and politicians alike are ignorant and antediluvian about this stuff.

Part of the reason is that our concepts of crime are steeped in politics and even religion. Right-wingers tend to suppose if you're nastier to people you

get less crime: they believe in discipline and punishment. Liberals tend to think if you're nicer to people you'll get less crime: they tend to believe in shorter sentences, social intervention, anti-poverty measures, and rehabilitation. Each selects the evidence that suits its position. US conservatives say "prison works – look crime is coming down"; while Swedish liberals say "but our crime is at a 30-year low." The US imprisons proportionately *eight times* more people than the Swedes – and it still has a very much higher crime rate. It almost seems as though high penal tariffs are a symptom of high crime rather than a solution to it.

People who are religiously or politically committed never let facts spoil a good dogma (even if they're police officers or academics). This is raw and urgent doctrine. Take an issue that's dear to the American soul: the right to bear arms. Those in favour say a ban on guns would just leave the bad guys with guns. It sounds persuasive, but each year in the States for every 1m citizens you murder 57; we in the UK murder only 14. Do you think Americans are inherently more than 4 times nastier than the British; over 4 times more murderous by nature? No. If we have an argument in Oxford or Manchester one of us might throw a punch. At worst I might have a knife. But if we routinely had access to guns I suspect we'd prove as murderous as you lot.

Hence the term that most of you are very familiar: "situational crime prevention". This is my own formula: $C=PTO$, or Crime = People (or people's predispositions or personalities) x Temptation x Opportunity. It's not just *bad people* that make for crime – it's *situations*, stupid. In any case, people are the hardest part of the equation to change.

So it's obvious where cops should be doing most of their work – changing situations. But they don't. Almost exclusively they work on badness: detecting it, arresting it, prosecuting it. For most cops it's their life. Accordingly they are extremely resistant to the idea that they're focusing on the wrong thing. Cops like to think that criminals are different from you and me. They see them every day. They get to know them. They're convinced that most of them are deviant. I agree it's a convenient distinction: the idea that there are honest people (or innocent victims) on the one hand and criminals on the other. But the dichotomy is as silly as dividing road users into 'motorists' and 'pedestrians'. Most of us drive, most of us also walk. We're both. Most of us are honest, most of us are dishonest.

This is not just a philosophical nicety. It has concrete, tangible, practical implications. Once we see crime as something anyone can be tempted into, we can begin to understand how to organise life better so that temptations can be curbed. Yes of course there are psychopaths, genuine social misfits, and villains brought up to villainy by their villainous parents. Very probably there is even some inheritance in criminality. But the idea of defining the world in terms of goodies and baddies is naïve. Who in this room has not broken criminal law: not declared tax in a minor way, exaggerated expenses? The honest citizen who pays cash to avoid paying tax is taking money from the local hospital as surely as if he'd climbed through the window of the hospital

office and stolen it from a desk. Maybe in your social milieu you haven't robbed a bank, but let those without sin cast the first stone.

In the UK about a third of men have a criminal conviction by their 40th birthday. When a third of us are deviant the word 'deviant' begins to lose its meaning. If we want to understand how to control the bulk of crime we need to grasp the fact that normal crime is normally committed by normal people. As Professor Marcus Felson puts it: crime is largely a rational extension of everyday activity.

The important consequence of that is that if you stop someone cheating on their subway fare they won't go out and burgle a house. If you make it hard to break into a payphone they won't dash out and mug an old lady. Studies in the UK, in Germany, and here in the United States suggest about 10% of crime is displaced. 90% is not. Even if that figure understates the problem, we all know it must essentially be true. It's why we lock our cars and keep our money in the bank. It's why we employ police officers. Making crime harder really does have a big impact on cutting it.

So what I propose to do now is to present a strategy for cutting crime – or rather three linked strategies. They are practical and apolitical, and they mostly get ahead of crime, but they work.

Two of the three strategies are largely upstream of crime. In other words they get in ahead of the opportunity to commit an offence. Note also, that the strategies do not necessarily involve increasing the numbers of police officers. I think we do need more police officers, but first let's use the existing ones properly.

So, what are the three strategies?

- First, and the great priority, is to reduce the opportunities for offending and remove the temptations that promote crime. This is a whole new role for the police – not chasing around after crime has happened.
- Next we need to reform the police to cope with the new demands of a new century. We must give them the skills to get ahead of crime, as well as solve crime more effectively once it has taken place.
- And third, it means re-thinking the criminal justice system. It is haphazard and has surprisingly little relevance to crime reduction.

There is nothing radically new about these components. It is because some of them have been partially applied that some crime rates are improving. This is what you've been doing at these POP conferences for the past 16 years. But what we need are political allies; what we lack is the determination to apply the answers systematically.

If we're going to change that we need proof, we need statistics, we need memorable stories. Let me offer you three. They include reckless corporate

policy; ill-conceived government policy, and sometimes both. Each has left a trail of crime in its wake, and the police did nothing – or almost nothing - to influence the key decisions.

The most obvious example – but I've never heard anyone mention it like this – is the epidemic of crime that exploded after the 2nd world war. It quickly became the most widespread offence of the late 20th century and the greatest recruiter of youngsters into crime: shoplifting. Cops were silent. Cops ran about like headless chickens trying to arrest people after it all went wrong, but they'd done nothing to avert it.

Why did shoplifting proliferate? Bad morals, bad parenting, single mums, insufficient discipline, soft sentencing? Maybe. But Ockham's razor teaches us to dispense with obvious explanations first. And the simple explanation is that shopkeepers took away the counters. The goods used to be on one side protected by the owner. The customer was on the other.

Another example is graffiti. Again was it bad schooling, divorce, lack of discipline? Or was it aerosols? You decide.

In the UK we had a classic demonstration of a crime wave mediated by the situation and not controlled by the police – it's a peculiarly British problem: mobile phone theft, mostly by kids on kids but it came to preoccupy 25% of all recorded robberies. There are now more handsets than people and they spawned a whole new industry of crime: vehicle break-ins, muggings, handbag thefts, and a whole galaxy of new opportunities for fraud. It was all highly predictable – and indeed I was one of those who predicted it 15 years ago in a warning paper to the British government. But who in the police thought through the crime implications? Who in the police did the math and realised cellphones tick all the boxes for property crime: fashionable, portable, valuable, concealable, disposable, and so on? Why was this epidemic allowed to take off? What are cops for?

It's so easy to design technology that makes a stolen phone unusable. But no-one consulted the police. Why would they? What skills did the police have to help them come up with products that were more secure?

But if the cops don't do it, who will? Phone manufacturers do well out of theft: for once your mobile's stolen you go out and buy another. Of course the shareholders of Nokia or Motorola are "decent" law-abiding people. But they polluted society. They created a new toxic emission and expected society to pay for the clean-up. The police obligingly tried to make arrests and the courts obligingly spent millions on trials, acquittals, convictions and sentences. But it was industry that pimped for crime. Thoughtlessly they lead to misery and injury on a scale far bigger in the UK than crime that results from drug peddlers or the Mafia.

Now let me give you an example where we can demonstrate that our approach works. It's car crime. In most countries vehicle crime peaked in the 1980s and 1990s. Again it had all been predictable – cars theft took over the

role of horse stealing. Again the police had done nothing to forestall it. The police had done nothing to advise the manufacturers or retailers or customers. The police weren't leaders – they were thrashing around in the wake of what followed.

Then we started retrofitting solutions: in the last 10 years the risk of vehicle-related theft has halved in the UK. Again, was this because of social policy, or penal policy, or a shift in cultural values? Maybe. But probably it had more to do with car alarms, deadlocks, steering wheel immobilisers, electronics that defeat hot-wiring, laminated glass, hi-fis with PIN codes or built-in to the dashboard. This isn't rocket science. This isn't social science. The drop in auto-crime is one to trumpet because only we can properly explain it.

There's an aside to this story you might like to know about, because it's a classic example of how public policy often fosters crime. As I say, industry was largely to blame for its scandalous negligence, and I'll come back to that in a moment. But British car crime is instructive because of an additional disgrace: the lax way in which cars were registered. In Britain you could go into a gas station and order any registration plate you like. We in the UCL Jill Dando Institute helped put a stop to that, but government ministers were so feeble about our other recommendations that you can sell a British car in the street without a receipt and without notifying anyone. It is a system which cultivates all the crimes made possible where a vehicle's apparent and real identities differ. And it's why British car crime is still unusually high.

So, this is my first priority: to reduce the temptations and opportunities that promote crime. It's a role the police have abdicated – and instead they shuffle around at the bottom of the food chain chasing around after crime has happened, making individual arrests.

How are you to do it? It's tough here in the United States. There are something like 18,000 law enforcement agencies here – in fact so many that people are arguing about the number – and that makes the police pitifully inconsequential in all but very local issues. My only advice is likely to be unpalatable: give up your autonomy and merge. At least campaign for a national executive that can take on industry and government and rattle their cages. After all, if there are statutory and proactive agencies to promote safety from accidents, why not one to protect people from crime? In the US and the UK fatal injury rates now are generally less than one quarter of those at the beginning of the 1960's and less than half of those at the beginning of the 1970's. Why not do the same for crime? Either you manage crime, or you wallow around in its wake.

In the UK it should be easier. We have only 50 police forces and these are about to be slimmed even further. We also have an association of chief police officers. It could be powerful – in fact it cares little for crime prevention, and it speaks volumes that the Crime Prevention Committee is a sub-committee of the Crime Committee and not vice versa. This must change. Meantime, crime is macho, crime prevention is for wimps.

That whole culture has to change. Cops need to move to the top of the food chain. They need to understand how government and corporate policies are made. They must understand how and why crime is low on the agenda. In shops, for example, a certain amount of theft is considered tolerable. There is no incentive to think otherwise. So to prevent crime and the opportunities for it, the police need to think about carrots and sticks. The incentives could be tax breaks, grants, funding partnerships; the sanctions could include licensing restrictions, withdrawal of police goodwill, and if necessary new legislation. As so often, Herman Goldstein was here before me, and you may have seen his hierarchy of these ideas in the *55 Steps* manual.

At present the cops treat crime as quite separate from all these top-level considerations, and so they insulate the decision-makers from fatally dangerous conclusions.

Manufacturers, service providers, policymakers will say: "Hey, you can't blame us!" The cops must say, "Oh yes we can!"

If I walk to a bank and withdraw \$100,000, put it in a clear polythene sack, then leave it on the sidewalk while I go back inside to get some change for the parking meter, whose fault is it if it's stolen?

The thief's of course. But is it partly mine? Of course it is. And if that sounds politically incorrect, take a deep breath because in my book blaming victims needs to go a great deal further. In fact it needs to go to the most politically explosive issue of whether women are partly to blame for rape. Well, no I think not if you use the word *blame*. But let's rephrase that: can a woman be partly *responsible*? If she gets hopelessly drunk in sexually provocative clothing? No? What if she's flirting? No? What if she goes home and lies on a bed with him? What if she walks home alone at 3am? At what point can an individual's recklessness be held to contribute to crime? I have no doubt about it. If I leave my phone and laptop on the seat of my car with the window ajar, I am partly responsible for what happens next. If I make or sell laptops which are easily stolen and can't be traced if they are, even when on WiFi, then I too am partly responsible for what happens next.

Commerce must face up to its responsibilities. In crime, just as much as in environmental protection, polluters must be made to pay. They must stop dumping more temptations and opportunities for crime and expecting us to foot the bill. The British criminal justice system costs taxpayers around £15 billion a year; the US one costs \$180 billion. My motto is simple: "Let those who lead us into temptation deliver us from evil".

But it's you, the cops, who need to do this. Proactive policing calls for lateral thinking rather than compliance, substantially new skills and greater expertise, new working practices, new partnerships, but above all new priorities. Get up off the floor. Get the expertise, get the analysis, then get into the boardrooms and the cabinet offices. Get out of the "old" industry of shutting stable doors, not the new one of designing better stables.

Thus far So I've talked about cutting temptations and opportunities for crime. I've urged the police to navigate the journey or be increasingly marginalised. Finally I promised to explore the Criminal Justice System, which I regard as haphazard and with surprisingly little relevance to crime reduction.

Moving up the food chain doesn't mean abdicating responsibility once crime has happened. One of the best ways of cutting temptation is to increase certainty of detection. But I am contemptuous of the court system and think you put far too much reliance on it.

First, a word about my 20 years experience of the detective role itself.

Think of policing as a business. While other industries have hugely increased efficiency in recent years the police have made little progress. In fact in the US and the UK generally, the number of offences cleared per officer has stayed roughly constant across time. Any company in manufacturing or service provision with so lamentable a record would have gone out of business. Intelligence-led policing must become the norm. Once again hallelujah to POP.

But the move upstream, higher up the food chain, makes detective efficiency all the more urgent. The shift I want towards situational prevention means a shift of resources away from traditional roles. In the new paradigm cops will need to take more initiative, the old class-based ranks get in the way, and I strongly suggest less reliance on military rank. Even the armed services are getting rid of traditional hierarchies at the cutting edge – look at the special services where command passes seamlessly on the basis of skill not seniority.

I also believe the police must be generally less insular. Most controversial, I want to see the opening up of detection. I believe there is no reason for crime investigation to be the sole preserve of the police. Air crash investigators, auditors, journalists, accountants and many other professions, call for cleverness, good organisation and discretion. Crime investigation should draw from a much wider reservoir of talent. In particular it needs to borrow from industry a coherent system for learning from successes and mistakes.

But investigative efficiency can never be revolutionised so long as the police continue to see their role as a conveyor belt into the doors of courtrooms and the wallets of lawyers. In a civil dispute nobody but a madman goes to court except as a last resort. Why? Because lawyers are ruinously expensive, and the outcome is frankly arbitrary. The result is not just unpredictable – it's often bound up with precedent and arcane rulings. So how come, when Gordon Brown or Uncle Sam are paying, do we do it as a *first* resort? Indeed, worse than that: often it's the only option coppers think of.

I want to stop you doing that. I want to point out how the courts are not just disgracefully expensive, but unjust, and – much worse when it comes to crime – a distraction.

I'm going to spend a few minutes explaining just how badly the criminal justice system has failed us because until you grasp how inadequate it is, how peripheral it is to crime and security, it's hard to take in just how big the opportunities are to forge alternative approaches. I can't over-emphasise this. The criminal justice system dominates our thinking about crime.

We have allowed lawyers to seize the agenda, spend billions in taxpayers money a year (much of it on themselves), and yet not be subject to any sort of payment by results. The criminal justice system employs some of the most able minds, but that collective intelligence has not been brought to bear on why the criminal justice system swallows so much cash for such demonstrably poor results.

And worst of all, the court process drives the police process. Just think about this: the courts are not interested in measurably cutting crime. That's not their job, that's not what lawyers are paid to do. The courts are there to allocate blame. But even the cops have gone along with this. Indeed, when we have found someone to blame we tend to say the crime is "solved". This puts the police remorselessly at the end of the line, chasing after people long after the problem has occurred. The focus on blame distracts the police. It means that most police officers grasp little about crime reduction beyond the narrow lens of catching and convicting criminals. It means the evidence and the data they amass are often not the things you would measure if you wanted to cut crime. Cops collect mountains of documents for lawyers, but as you here all know only too painfully, they gather relatively little for crime prevention. We cannot move the police higher up the food chain while they are slaves to the court conveyor.

Most people have almost unquestioning faith in the courts – even the normally cynical and inquisitive media are generally supine. But suppose we were properly sceptical; suppose it really mattered. Suppose we were investigating not how a crime happened but how a plane crashed? Take the disastrous fire on the Air France Concorde that came down on the outskirts of Paris.

Would you really leave it to a jury of 12 people – selected for their lack of expertise, their ignorance – in the literal sense: their naivety? Indeed they'd be deselected if they knew anything about airlines, air traffic control or aeronautical engineering. They'd then be subjected to biased arguments by people paid specifically to be selective in their evidence. In fact a lot of the most potent evidence would be called "inadmissible" and would be withheld from them. Some cases go on for days, some for months – and the more inefficient it is the more the lawyers earn in fees.

Eventually our jury would go into a private room on their own in secret – and after a while the 12 of them would come out and give their verdict. Of course in a criminal trial the only question would be: was someone to blame? Maybe the Continental Airlines engineer who let a jagged piece of metal fall on the runway. He may or may not be sent to prison and then everyone else would go home. They would do nothing to make Concorde safe. There would be no

reengineering of the wings, or tyres, or fuel tank. The case would have been “solved”.

But let’s stretch reality even further. Even presuming the jury did recommend modifications, and on the basis of these they certified Concorde as safe to take to the skies again. Would you have flown in Concorde again on the basis of a jury’s say-so?

Well, I for one, would not. And nor would any sensible lawyer. There is less guarantee of truth, liberty or justice, at least in jury trials (where most people think liberty resides) than there is of secrecy and impenetrability.

The CJS is an inadequate way of assessing facts, compliance with red tape is of more importance than finding the truth, and it’s concerned with blame rather than with crime prevention. Perhaps some of that could be forgiven if it was reliable in preventing re-offending. It isn’t.

The recidivism rate in the US is appalling and it’s only slightly better in Britain: about 50% for adults and 75% for young offenders. And those figures point an unreasonably rosy picture because they count only those who are actually caught for a 2nd time. Actual re-offending (eg in a British study looking at sex offenders) is more than 5x greater than reconviction rates.

Each year between us we tip billions of pounds and billions of dollars into a dark void of so-called “justice”. Maybe it is necessary to be vindictive to offenders so that ordinary people don’t turn vigilante, but let’s not kid ourselves that this is reforming anyone.

What difference would it make if we regarded the courts as a last resort, rather than our instinctive response to crime? Well, most people would be surprised. You’ll know this stuff and won’t need much convincing.

Conviction rates vary from state to state and country to country, but the overall pattern is pretty much the same. If you look at the figures for England & Wales, we’re very good at catching murderers – the conviction rate is roughly 95%. But on average you get the following pattern:

For every 100 crimes revealed by the British Crime Survey 45 are reported to the police. The unreported crimes are often minor ones, like bicycle theft where the bike is uninsured; but surprisingly often they are serious crimes: savage beatings, the great majority of rapes, sometimes even murder. Even that doesn’t include corporate crime like fraud or shoplifting, quite apart from concealed crime like tax evasion.

But worse still, the police don’t record everything that’s reported to them, and even when they do each police force has traditionally used different criteria. Of the 45 reported, only 24 are recorded in official police logs. 6 of these are “cleared up” (though often no action is taken); 3 result in cautions or convictions; and fewer than 1% result in a custodial sentence.

You put a lot in at the top and get little out at the end. It's called it the criminal justice funnel. If you define crime the way the public defines crime it means that:

- 99% of crime does not result in a custodial sentence
- 97% of crime does not result in punishment, or even a caution.

No wonder I say that the criminal justice system is largely tangential to crime

This is slightly unfair, of course since many crimes are committed by repeat offenders who may be ensnared by the system even though they are convicted or sentenced for only one of their offences. Even so, it must be true that most answers to crime lie outside the CJS. Don't get me wrong; it is still vital to catch people when they do bad things. The worst offenders need to be removed from the opportunity to re-offend.

But that's quite different from a blame culture. And our reliance on the courts imprisons us: it traps our focus of attention. It traps us behind events and not ahead of them. It leaves us picking up the pieces. It consumes almost all the formal resources thrown at curbing crime. It squeezes everything else to the margins. And, most significant of all: it encourages us to look in the wrong direction.

So that's why I'm pleased to be here at the POP convention. That's why I so readily accepted to come here and speak. Because POP is encouraging us to look in the right direction. It requires more than an annual meeting. It requires a revolution. The transformation in policing has to be at least as big as the innovations seen in manufacturing and in other areas of commerce.

Yet I don't observe these issues being widely discussed by the media or politicians. Sadly, what passes for debate on law and order is generally conducted as though we simply need more of what we did in the past. Sadly, too, most criminology is bankrupt. There have been a handful of people ahead of the game (most of them here, and not least Prof Goldstein), but most of the rest have been more concerned with sociological theorising than practical solutions. On the other hand, when you look at humanity's most conspicuous advances over the last century or so, you find they are all the product of science. That's why I came up with the idea of a new approach I called crime science, and that's why we founded the Jill Dando Institute to give some coherence to this Diaspora of good practice.

But don't rely on us. Academics can come up with ideas, they can check things out for you, they can advise, but they can't do your job. Moreover, politicians won't drive the agenda upstream. It's down to you – down to cops, down to the police themselves to move firmly up the food chain.

Thank you.